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Mike Flannery, On Duty and Off

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

That Pup

The Great American Pie Company

Pigs is Pigs

Kilo

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"'Pho-e-nix!' Is it a man's name, I dunno?"

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Mike Flannery

On Duty and Off

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," "The Water Goats," "The Thin Santa Claus," "That Pup," Etc.

With Illustrations
By GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

A. L. BURT COMPANY
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JUST LIKE A CAT

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I

JUST LIKE A CAT

They were doing good work out back of the Westcote express office. The Westcote Land and Improvement Company was ripping the whole top off Seiler's Hill and dumping it into the swampy meadow, and Mike Flannery liked to sit at the back door of the express office, when there was nothing to do, and watch the endless string of waggons dump the soft clay and sand there. Already the swamp was a vast landscape of small hills and valleys of new, soft soil, and soon it would burst into streets and dwellings. That would mean more work, but Flannery did not care; the company had allowed him a helper already, and Flannery had hopes that by the time the swamp was populated Timmy would be

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of some use. He doubted it, but he had hopes.

The four-thirty-two train had just pulled in, and Timmy had gone across to meet it with his hand-truck, and now he returned. He came lazily, pulling the cart behind him with one hand. He did n't seem to care whether he ever got back to the office. Flannery's quick blood rebelled.

"Is that all th' faster ye can go?" he shouted. "Make haste! Make haste! 'Tis an ixpriss company ye are workin' fer, an' not a cimitery. T' look at ye wan w'u'd think ye was nawthin' but a funeral!"

"Sure I am," said Timmy. "'Tis as ye have said it, Flannery; I 'm th' funeral."

Flannery stuck out his under jaw, and his eyes blazed. For nothing at all he would have let Timmy have a fist in the side of the head, but what was the use? There are some folks you can't pound sense into, and Timmy was one of them.

"What have ye got, then?" asked Flannery.

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"Nawthin' but th' corpse," said Timmy impudently, and Flannery did do it. He swung his big right hand at the lad, and would have taught him something, but Timmy was n't there. He had dodged. Flannery ground his teeth, and bent over the hand-truck. The next moment he straightened up and motioned to Timmy, who had stepped back from him, nearly half a block back.

"Come back," he said peacefully. "Come on back. This wan time I 'll do nawthin' to ye. Come on back an' lift th' box into th' office. But th' next time ——"

Timmy came back, grinning. He took the box off the truck, carried it into the office, and set it on the floor. It was not a large box, nor heavy, just a small box with strips nailed across the top, and there was an Angora cat in it. It was a fine, large Angora cat, but it was dead.

Flannery looked at the tag that was nailed on the side of the box. "Ye 'd betther git th'

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waggon, Timmy," he said slowly, "an' proceed with th' funeral up t' Missus Warman's. This be no weather for perishable goods t' be lyin' 'round th' office. Quick speed is th' motto av th' Interurban Ixpriss Company whin th' weather is eighty-four in th' shade. An', Timmy," he called as the boy moved toward the door, "make no difficulty sh'u'd she insist on receiptin' fer th' goods as bein' damaged. If nicissary take th' receipt fer 'Wan long-haired cat, damaged.' But make haste. 'Tis in me mind that sh'u'd ye wait too long Missus Warman will not be receivin' th' consignment at all. She 's wan av th' particular kind, Timmy."

In half an hour Timmy was back. He came into the office lugging the box, and let it drop on the floor with a thud.

"She won't take no damaged cats," said Timmy shortly.

Mike Flannery laid his pen on his desk with almost painful slowness and precision. Slowly he slid off his chair, and slowly he

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picked up his cap and put it on his head. He did not say a word. His brow was drawn into deep wrinkles, and his eyes glittered as he walked up to the box with almost supernaturally stately tread and picked it up. His lips were firmly set as he walked out of the office into the hot sun. Timmy watched him silently.

In less than half an hour Mike Flannery came into the office again, quietly, and set the box silently on the floor. Noiselessly he hung up his cap on the nail above the big calendar back of the counter. He sank into his chair and looked for a long while at the blank wall opposite him.

"An' t' think," he said at last, like one still wrapped in a great blanket of surprise, "t' think she did n't swear wan cuss th' whole time! Thim ladies is wonderful folks! I wonder did she say th' same t' ye as she said t' me, Timmy?"

"Sure she did," said Timmy, grinning as usual.

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"Will ye think of that, now!" said Flannery with admiration. "'Tis a grand constitution she must be havin', that lady. Twice in wan afternoon! I wonder could she say th' same three times? 'Tis not possible."

He ran his hand across his forehead and sighed, and his eyes fell on the box. It was still where he had put it, but he seemed surprised to see it there. He had no recollection of anything after Mrs. Warman had begun to talk. He picked up his pen again.

"Interurban Express Co., New York," he wrote. "Consiny Mrs. Warman wont reciev cat way bill 23645 Hibbert and Jones consinor cat is ——"

He grinned and ran the end of the pen through his stubble of red hair.

"What is th' swell worrd fer dead, Timmy?" he asked. "I 'm writin' a letter t' th' swell clerks in New Yorrk that be always guyin' me about me letters, an' I 'll hand thim a swell worrd fer wance."

"Deceased," said Timmy, grinning.

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"'Tis not that wan I was thinkin' of," said Flannery, "but that wan will do. 'Tis a high-soundin' worrd, deceased."

He dipped his pen in the ink again.

"—cat is diseased," he wrote. "Pleas give disposal. Mike Flannery."

When the New York office of the Interurban Express Company received Flannery's letter they called up Hibbert & Jones on the telephone. Hibbert & Jones was the big department store, and it was among the Interurban's best customers. When the Interurban could do it a favour it was policy to do so, and the clerk knew that sending a cat back and forth by rail was not the best thing for the cat, especially if the cat was diseased.

"That cat," said the manager of the live-animal department of Hibbert & Jones, "was in good health when it left here, absolutely, so far as we know. If it was not it is none of our business. Mrs. Warman came in and picked the cat out from a dozen or more, and paid for it. It is her cat. It does n't interest us any

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more. And another thing: You gave us a receipt for that cat in good order; if it was damaged in transit it is none of our affair, is it?"

"Owner's risk," said the Interurban clerk. "You know we only accept live animals for transportation at owner's risk."

"That lets us out, then," said the Hibbert & Jones clerk. "Mrs. Warman is the owner. Ring off, please."

Westcote is merely a suburb of New York, and mails are frequent, and Mike Flannery found a letter waiting for him when he opened the office the next morning. It was brief. It said:

"Regarding cat, W. B. 23645, this was sent at owner's risk, and Mrs. Warman seems to be the owner. Cat should be delivered to her. We are writing her from this office, but in case she does not call for it immediately, you will keep it carefully in your office. You had better have a veterinary look at the cat. Feed it regularly."

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Mike Flannery folded the letter slowly and looked down at the cat. "Feed it! he exclaimed. "I wonder, now, was that a misprint fer fumigate it, fer that is what it will be wantin' mighty soon, if I know anything about deceased cats. I wonder do thim dudes in New Yorrk be thinkin, th' long-haired cat is only fainted, mebby? Do they think they see Mike Flannery sittin' be th' bedside av th' cat, fannin' it t' bring it back t' consciousness? Feed it! Niver in me life have I made a specialty av cats, long-haired or short-haired, an' I do not be pretindin' t' be a profissor av cats, but 'tis me sittled belief that whin a cat is as dead as that wan is it stops eatin'."

He looked resentfully at the cat in the box. "I wonder sh'u'd I put th' late laminted out on th' back porrch till th' veterinary comes t' take its pulse? I wonder what th' ixpriss company wants a veterinary t' butt into th' thing fer annyhow? Is it th' custom nowadays t' require a certificate av health fer

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every cat that 's as dead as that wan is before th' funeral comes off? Sure, I do believe th' ixpriss company has doubts av Mike Flannery's ability t' tell is a cat dead or no. Mebby 'tis thrue. Mebby so. But wan thing I 'm dang sure av, an' that is that sh'u'd the weather not turrn off t' a cold wave by to-morry mornin' 't will take no coroner t' know th' cat is dead."

He opened the letter again and reread it. As he did so the scowl on his face increased. He held up the letter and slapped it with the back of his hand.

"'Kape it carefully in your office,'" he read with scorn. "Sure! An' what about Flannery? Does th' man think I 'm t' sit side be side with th' dead pussy cat an' thry t' work up me imagination t' thinkin' I 'm sittin' in a garden av tuberoses? 'Tis well enough t' say kape it, but cats like thim does not kape very well. Th' less said about th' way they kapes th' betther."

Timmy entered the office, and as he passed

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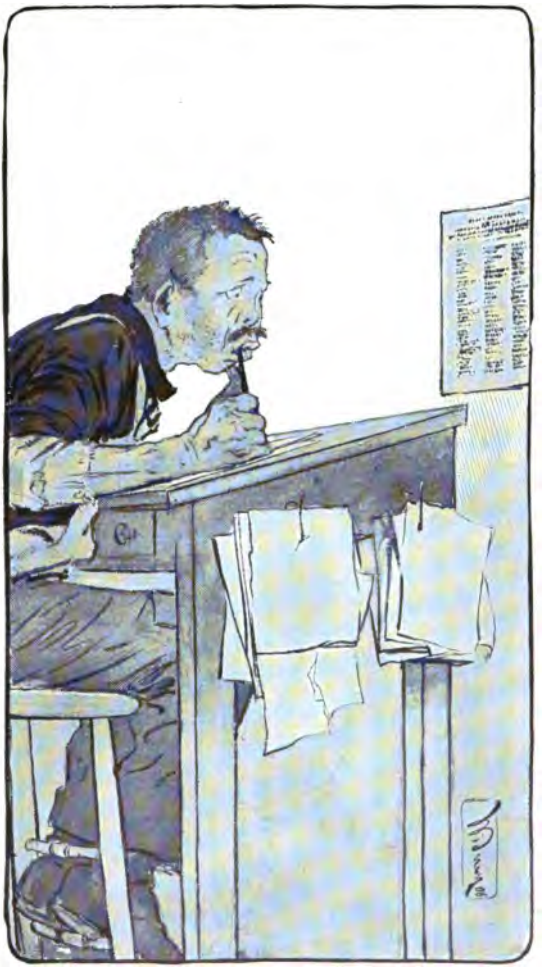

" ' 'Tis well enough t' say kape it, but cats like thim does not kape very well ' "

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the box he sniffed the air in a manner that at once roused Flannery's temper.

"Sthop that!" he shouted. "I 'll have none av yer foolin' t'-day. What fer are ye puckerin' up yer nose at th' cat fer? There 's nawthin' th' matther with th' cat. 'Tis as sound as a shillin', an' there 's no call fer ye t' be sniffin' 'round, Timmy, me lad! Go about yer worrk, an' lave th' cat alone. 'Twill kape — 'twill kape a long time yet. Don't be so previous, me lad. If ye want t' sniff, there 'll be plinty av time by an' by. Plinty av it."

"Ye ain't goin' t' keep th' cat, are ye?" asked Timmy with surprise.

"Let be," said Flannery softly, with a gentle downward motion of his hands. "Let be. If 'tis me opinion 't w'u'd be best t' kape th' cat fer some time, I will kape it. Mike Flannery is th' ixpriss agint av this office, Tim, me bye, an' sh'u'd he be thinkin' 't w'u'd be best fer th' intherists av th' company t' kape a cat that is no longer livin', he will. There

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be manny things fer ye t' learn, Timmy, before ye know th' whole av th' ixpriss business, an' dead cats is wan av thim."

"G'wan!" said Timmy with a long-drawn vowel. "I know a dead cat when I see one, now."

"Mebby," said Flannery shortly. "Mebby. An' mebby not. But do ye know where Doc Pomeroy hangs out? Go an' fetch him."

As Timmy passed the box on the way out he looked at the cat with renewed interest. He began to have a slight doubt that he might not know a dead cat when he saw one, after all, if Flannery was going to have a veterinary come to look at it. But the cat certainly *looked* dead — extremely dead.

Doc Pomeroy was a tall, lank man with a slouch in his shoulders and a sad, hollow-chested voice. His voice was the deepest and mournfullest bass. "The boy says you want me to look at a cat," he said in his hopeless tone. "Where 's the cat?"

Flannery walked to the box and stood over

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it, and Doc Pomeroy stood at the other side. He did not even bend down to look at the cat.

"That cat 's dead," he said without emotion.

"Av course it is," said Flannery. "'T was dead th' firrst time I seen it."

"The boy said you wanted me to look at a cat," said Doc Pomeroy.

"Sure!" said Flannery. "Sure I did!" That 's th' cat. I wanted ye t' see th' cat. What might be yer opinion av it?"

"What do you want me to do with the cat?" asked Doc Pomeroy.

"Look at it," said Flannery pleasantly. "Nawthin' but look at it. Thim is me orders. 'Have a veterinary look at th' cat,' is what they says. An' I can see be th' look on ye that 'tis yer opinion 'tis a mighty dead cat."

"That cat," said the veterinary slowly, "is as dead as it can be. A cat can't be any deader than that one is."

"It cannot," said Flannery positively. "But it can be longer dead."

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"If I had a cat that had been dead longer than that cat has been dead," said Doc Pomeroy as he moved away, "I would n't have to see it to know that it was dead. A cat that has been dead longer than that cat has been dead lets you know it. That cat will let you know it pretty quick, now."

"Thank ye," said Flannery. "An' ye have had a good look at it? Ye w'u'd n't like t' look at it again, mebby? Thim is me orders, t'allow ixamination be th' veterinary, an' if 't w'u'd be anny comfort t' ye I will draw up a chair so ye can look all ye want to."

The veterinary raised his sad eyes to Flannery's face and let them rest there a moment. "Much obliged," he said, but he did not look at the cat again. He went back to his headquarters.

That afternoon Flannery and Timmy began walking quickly when they passed the box, and toward evening, when Flannery had to make out his reports, he went out on the

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back porch and wrote them, using a chair-seat for a desk. One of his tasks was to write a letter to the New York office.

"W.B. 23645," he wrote, "the vetinnary has seen the cat, and its diseased all right. he says so. no sine of Mrs. Warman yet but ile keep the cat in the offis if you say so as long as i cann stand it. but how cann i feed a diseased cat. i nevver fed a diseased cat yet. what do you feed cats lik that."

The next morning when Flannery reached the office he opened the front door, and immediately closed it with a bang and locked it. Timmy was late, as usual. Flannery stood a minute looking at the door, and then he sat down on the edge of the curb to wait for Timmy. The boy came along after a while, indolently as usual, but when he saw Flannery he quickened his pace a little.

"What 's th' matter?" he asked. "Locked out?"

Flannery stood up. He did not even say good morning. He ran his hand into his

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pocket and pulled out the key. "Timmy," he said gently, almost lovingly, "I have business that takes me t' th' other side av town. I have th' confidence in ye, Timmy, t' let ye open up th' office. 'T will be good ixperience fer ye." He cast his eye down the street, where the car line made a turn around the corner. The trolley wire was shaking. "Th' way ye open up," he said slowly, "is t' push th' key into th' keyhole. Push th' key in, Timmy, an' thin turrn it t' th' lift. Wait!" he called, as Timmy turned. "'Tis important t' turrn t' th' lift, not th' right. An' whin ye have th' door open "— the car was rounding the corner, and Flannery stepped into the street — "whin ye have th' door open — th' door open"— the car was where he could touch it — "take th' cat out behint th' office an' bury it, an' if ye don't I 'll fire ye out av yer job. Mind that!"

The car sped by, and Flannery swung aboard. Timmy watched it until it went out of sight around the next corner, and then he

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turned to the office door. He pushed the key in, and turned it to the left.

When Flannery returned the cat was gone, and so was Timmy. The grocer next door handed Flannery the key, and Flannery's face grew red with rage. He opened the door of the office, and for a moment he was sure the cat was not gone, but it was. Flannery could not see the box; it was gone. He threw open the back door and let the wind sweep through the office, and it blew a paper off the desk. Flannery picked it up and read it. It was from Timmy.

'Mike Flannery, esquire," it said. "Take youre old job. Im tired of the express bisiness. Too much cats and missus Warmans in it. im going to New York to look for a decent job. I berried the cat for you but no more for me. youres truly."

Flannery smiled. The loss of Timmy did not bother him so long as the cat had gone also. He turned to the tasks of the day with a light heart.

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The afternoon mail brought him a letter from the New York office. "Regarding W.B. 23645," it said, "and in answer to yours of yesterday's date. In our previous communication we clearly requested you to have a veterinary look at the cat. We judge from your letter that you neglected to do this, as the veterinary would certainly have told you what to feed the cat. See the veterinary at once and ask him what to feed the cat. Then feed the cat what he tells you to feed it. We presume it is not necessary for us to tell you to water the cat."

Flannery grinned. "An' ain't, thim th' jokers, now!" he exclaimed. "'Tis some smart bye must have his fun with ould Flannery! Go an' see th' veterinary! An' ask him what t' feed th' cat! 'Good mornin', Misther Pomeroy. Do ye remimber th' dead cat ye looked at yisterday? 'Tis in a bad way th' mornin', sor. 'Tis far an' away deader than it was yisterday. We had th' funeral this mornin'. What w'u'd ye be advisin' me t'

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food it fer a regular diet now?' Oh yis! I 'll go t' th' veterinary — not!"

He stared at the letter frowningly.

"An' 'tis not nicessary t' tell me t' water th' cat!" he said. "Oh, no, they 'll be trustin' Flannery t' water th' cat. Flannery has loads av time. 'Tis no need fer him t' spind his time doin' th' ixpriss business. 'Git th' sprinklin'-can, Flannery, an' water th' cat. Belike if ye water it well ye 'll be havin' a fine flower-bed av long-haired cats out behint th' office. Water th' cat well, an' plant it awn th' sunny side av th' house, an' whin it sprouts transplant it t' th' shady side where it can run up th' trellis. 'T will bloom hearty until cold weather, if watered plinty!' Bechune thim an' me 'tis me opinion th' cat was kept too long t' grow well anny more."

Mrs. Warman was very much surprised that afternoon to receive a letter from the express company. As soon as she saw the name of the company in the corner of the envelope her face hardened. She had an

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intuition that this was to be another case where the suffering public was imposed upon by an overbearing corporation, and she did not mean to be the victim. She had refused the cat. Fond as she was of cats, she had never liked them dead. She was through with that cat. She tore open the envelope. A woman never leaves an envelope unopened. The next moment she was more surprised than before.

"Dear Madam," said the letter. "Regarding a certain cat sent to your address through our company by Hibbert & Jones of this city, while advising you of our entire freedom from responsibility in the matter, all animals being accepted by us at owner's risk only, we beg to make the following communication: The cat is now in storage at our express office in Westcote, and is sick. A letter from our agent there leads us to believe that the cat may not receive the best of attention at his hands. In order that it may be properly fed and cared for we would suggest

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that you accept the cat from our hands, under protest if you wish, until you can arrange with Messrs. Hibbert & Jones as to the ownership. In asking you to take the cat in this way we have no other object in view than to stop the charges for storage and care, which are accumulating, and to make sure that the cat is receiving good attention. We might say, however, that Hibbert & Jones assure us that the cat is your property, and therefore, until we have assurance to the contrary, we must look to you for all charges for transportation, storage, and care accruing while the cat is left with us. Yours very truly."

When she had read the letter Mrs. Warman's emotions were extremely mixed. She felt an undying anger toward the express company; she felt an entirely different and more personal anger toward the firm of Hibbert & Jones; but above all she felt a great surprise regarding the cat. If ever she had seen a cat that she thought was a thoroughly dead cat this was the cat. She

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had had many cats in her day, and she had always thought she knew a dead cat when she saw one, and now this dead cat was alive — ailing, perhaps, but alive. The more she considered it, the less likely it seemed to her that she could have been mistaken about the deadness of that cat. It had been offered to her twice. The first time she saw it she knew it was dead, and the second time she saw it she knew it was, if anything, more dead than it had been the first time. The conclusion was obvious. A cat had been sent to her in a box. She had refused to receive a dead cat, and the expressmen had taken the box away again. Now there was a live, but sick, cat in the box. She had her opinion of expressmen, express companies, and especially of the firm of Hibbert & Jones. This full opinion she sent to Hibbert & Jones by the next mail.

The next morning Flannery was feeling fine. He whistled as he went to the nine-

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twenty train, and whistled as he came back to the office with his hand-truck full of packages and the large express envelope with the red seals on the back snugly tucked in his inside pocket, but when he opened the envelope and read the first paper that fell out he stopped whistling.

"Agent, Westcote," said the letter. "Regarding W.B. 23645, Hibbert & Jones, consignor of the cat you are holding in storage, advises us that the consignee claims cat you have is not the cat shipped by consignor. Return cat by first train to this office. If the cat is not strong enough to travel alone have veterinary accompany it. Yrs. truly, Interurban Express Company, per J."

At first a grin spread over the face of Flannery. "'Not sthrong enough t' travel alone'!" he said with a chuckle. "If iver there was a sthrong cat 'tis that wan be this time, an' 't w'u'd be a waste av ixpinse t' hire a ——" Suddenly his face sobered.

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He glanced out of the back door at the square mile of hummocky sand and clay.

"'Return cat be firrst trrain t' this office,'" he repeated blankly. He left his seat and went to the door and looked out. "Return th' cat," he said, and stepped out upon the edge of the soft, new soil. It was all alike in its recently dug appearance. "Th' cat, return it," he repeated, taking steps this way and that way, with his eyes on the clay at his feet. He walked here and there, but one place looked like the others. There was room for ten thousand cats, and one cat might have been buried in any one of ten thousand places. Flannery sighed. Orders were orders, and he went back to the office and locked the doors. He borrowed a coal-scoop from the grocer next door and went out and began to dig up the clay and sand. He dug steadily and grimly. Never, perhaps, in the history of the world had a man worked so hard to dig up a dead cat. Even in ancient Egypt, where the cat was a sacred animal,

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they did not dig them up when they had them planted. Quite the contrary: it was a crime to dig them up; and Flannery, as he dug, had a feeling that it would be almost a crime to dig up this one. Never, perhaps, did a man dig so hard to find a thing he really did not care to have.

Flannery dug all that morning. At lunch-time he stopped digging — and went without his lunch — long enough to deliver the packages that had come on the early train. As he passed the station he saw a crowd of boys playing hockey with an old tomato-can, and he stopped. When he reached the office he was followed by sixteen boys. Some of them had spades, some of them had small fire-shovels, some had only pointed sticks, but all were ready to dig. He showed them where he had already dug.

"Twinty-five cints apiece, annyhow," he said, "an' five dollars fer th' lucky wan that finds it."

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"All right," said one. "Now what is it we are to dig for?"

"'T is a cat," said Flannery, "a dead wan."

"Go on!" cried the boy sarcastically. "What *is* it we are to dig for?"

"I can get you a dead cat, mister," said another. "Our cat died."

"'T will not do," said Flannery. "'T is a special cat I 'm wantin'. 'T is a long-haired cat, an' 't was dead a long time. Ye can't mistake it whin ye come awn to it. If ye dig up a cat ye know no wan w'u'd want t' have, that 's it."

The sixteen boys dug, and Flannery, in desperation, dug, but a square mile is a large plot of ground to dig over. No one, having observed that cat on the morning when Timmy planted it, would have believed it could be put in any place where it could not be instantly found again. It had seemed like a cat that would advertise itself. But that is just like a cat; it is always around

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when it is n't needed, and when it is needed it can't be found. Before the afternoon was half over the boys had tired of digging for a dead cat and had gone away, but Flannery kept at it until the sun went down. Then he looked to see how much of the plot was left to dig up. It was nearly all left. As he washed his hands before going to his boarding-house a messenger-boy handed him a telegram. Flannery tore it open with misgivings.

"Cat has not arrived. Must come on night train. Can accept no excuse," it read.

Flannery folded the telegram carefully and put it in his hip pocket. He washed his hands with more deliberate care than he had ever spent on them. He adjusted his coat most carefully on his back, and then walked with dignity to his boarding-house. He knew what would happen. There would be an inspector out from the head office in the morning. Flannery would probably have to look for a new job.

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In the morning he was up early, but he was still dignified. He did not put on his uniform, but wore his holiday clothes, with the black tie with the red dots. An inspector is a hard man to face, but a man in his best clothes has more of a show against him. Flannery came to the office the back way; there was a possibility of the inspector's being already at the front door. As he crossed the filled-in meadows he poked unhopefully at the soil here and there, but nothing came of it. But suddenly his eyes lighted on a figure that he knew, just turning out of the alley three buildings from the office. It was Timmy!

Flannery had no chance at all. He ran, but how can a man run in his best clothes across soft, new soil when he is getting a bit too stout? And Timmy had seen him first. When Flannery reached the corner of the alley Timmy was gone, and with a sigh that was partly regret and partly breathlessness from his run Flannery turned into the

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main street. There was the inspector, sure enough, standing on the curb. Flannery had lost some of his dignity, but he made up for it in anger. He more than made up for it in the heat he had run himself into. He was red in the face. He met the inspector with a glare of anger.

"There be th' key, if 't is that ye' re wantin', an' ye may take it an' welcome, fer no more will I be ixpriss agint fer a company that sinds long-haired cats dead in a box an' orders me t' kape thim throo th' hot weather fer a fireside companion an' ready riferince av perfumery. How t' feed an' water dead cats av th' long-haired kind I may not know, an' how t' live with dead cats I may not know, but whin t' bury dead cats I *do* know, an' there be plinty av other jobs where a man is not ordered t' dig up forty-siven acres t' find a cat that was buried none too soon at that!"

"What 's that?" said the inspector. "Is that cat dead?"

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"An' what have I been tellin' th' dudes in th' head office all th' while?" asked Flannery with asperity. "What but that th' late deceased dead cat was defunct an' no more? An' thim insultin' an honest man with their 'Have ye stholen th' cat out av th' box, Flannery, an' put in an inferior short-haired cat?' I want no more av thim! Here 's the key. Good day t' ye!"

"Hold on," said the inspector, putting his hand on Flannery's arm. "You don't go yet. I 'll have a look at your cash and your accounts first. What you say about that cat may be true enough, but we have got to have proof of it. That was a valuable cat, that was. It was an Angora cat, a real Angora cat. You 've got to produce that cat before we are through with you."

"Projuce th' cat!" said Flannery angrily. "Th' cat is safe an' sound in th' back lot. I presint ye with th' lot. If 't is not enough fer ye, go awn an' do th' dirthy worrk ye

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have t' do awn me. I 'll dig no more fer th' cat."

The inspector unlocked the door and entered the office. It was hot with the close heat of a room that has been locked up overnight. Just inside the door the inspector stopped and sniffed suspiciously. No express office should have smelled as that one smelled.

"Wan minute!" cried Flannery, pulling away from the inspector's grasp. "Wan minute! I have a hint there be a long-haired cat near by. Wance ye have been near wan av thim ye can niver mistake thim Angora cats. I w'u'd know th' symbol av thim with me eyes shut. 'T is a signal ye c'u'd tell in th' darrk."

He hurried to the back door. The cat was there, all right. A little deader than it had been, perhaps, but it was there on the step, long hair and all.

"Hurroo!" shouted Flannery. "An' me thinkin' I w'u'd niver see it again! Can ye

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smell th' proof, Misther Inspictor? 'T is good sthrong proof fer ye! An' I sh'u'd have knowed it all th' while. Angora cats I know not be th' spicial species, an' th' long-haired breed av cats is not wan I have associated with much, an' cats so dang dead as this wan I do not kape close in touch with, ginerally, but all cats have a grrand resimblance t' cats. Look at this wan, now. 'T is just like a cat. It kem back."

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THE THREE HUNDRED

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II

THE THREE HUNDRED

There was a certain big sort of masterfulness about the president of the Interurban Express Company that came partly from his natural force of character and partly from the position he occupied as head of the company, and when he said a thing must be done he meant it. In his own limited field he was a bigger man than the President of the United States, for he was not only the chief executive of the Interurban Express Company, but he made its laws as well. He could issue general orders turning the whole operation of the road other end to as easily as a national executive could order the use of, let us say, a simplified form of spelling in a few departments of the Government. He sat in the

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head office of the company at Franklin and said "Let this be done," and, in every suburban town where the Interurban had offices, that thing was done, under pain of dismissal from the service of the company. Even Flannery, who was born rebellious, would scratch his red hair in the Westcote office and grumble and then follow orders.

Old Simon Gratz came into the president's office one morning and sat himself into a vacant chair with a grunt of disapprobation, the same grunt of disapprobation that had been like saw-filing to the nerves of the president for many years, and the president immediately prepared to contradict him, regardless of what it might be that Simon Gratz disapproved of. It happened to be the simplified spelling. He waved the morning paper at the president and wanted to know what *he* thought of this outrageous thing of chopping off the tails of good old English words with an

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official carving-knife, ruining a language that had been fought and bled for at Lexington, and making it look like a dialect story, or a woman with two front teeth out.

It rather strained the president sometimes to think of a sound train of argument against Simon Gratz at a moment's notice. Sometimes he had to abandon the beliefs of a lifetime in order to take the other side of a proposition that Simon Gratz announced unexpectedly, and it was still harder to get up an enthusiasm for one side of a thing of which he had never heard, as he sometimes had to do; but he was ready to meet Simon Gratz on either side of the simplified spelling matter, for he had read about it himself in the morning paper. It had seemed a rather unimportant matter until Simon Gratz mentioned it, but now it immediately became a thing of the most intimate concern.

"What do I think?" he asked. "I think it is the grandest thing — the most sensible

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thing — the greatest step forward that has been taken for centuries. That is what I think. It is a revolution! That is what I think, Mr. Gratz."

He swung around in his chair and struck his desk with his fist to emphasize his words. Mr. Gratz, whose opinions were the more obnoxious because he was a stockholder of the company, sniffed. The way he had of sniffing was like a red rag to a bull, and he meant it as such. The president accepted it in the spirit in which it was meant. He said: "Bah!"

"I will tell you what it is," said Mr. Gratz, pushing his chin up at the president. "It is the most idiotic ——"

"Don't tell me!" cried Mr. Smalley. "I don't want you to tell me anything! What do you know about the English language, anyhow? 'Gratz!' That is a pretty name for a man who pretends to have a right to say how the English language shall be spelled! Don't I know your history, Mr.

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"'I will tell you what it is,' said Mr. Gratz."

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Gratz? Don't I know you had your name changed from Gratzensteinburgher? And you pretend to be worried because our President and the most talented men in the country want to drop a few useless letters out of a measly three hundred words! I tell you these changes in spelling should have been made long ago. Long ago. This is the business man's age, Mr. Gratz-and-the-rest-of-it. Yes, sir! And you, as a business man, should be proud of this concession made by our most noted scholars to the needs of the business man."

"Look at 'em!" sneered Mr. Gratz, patting the list of three hundred revised words with his finger, and shoving the newspaper under Mr. Smalley's nose. "Poor bob-tailed, one-eyed mongrels! Progress! It is anarchy — impudence —— Look at this — 't-h-r-u!' What kind of a word is that? 'T-h-o!' What kind of a thing is that? What in the world is a 's-i-t-h-e,' I would like to know?"

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Mr. Smalley had not been sufficiently interested in the matter of new spelling to save his morning paper. He had not even read through the list of three hundred words. But he was interested now. The new spelling had become the thing most dear to his heart, and he pulled the paper from Mr. Gratz's hand and slapped the list of words warmly.

"Pfogress! Yes, progress! That is the word. And economy!" he cried. "That is the true American spirit! That is what appeals to the man who is not a fossil!" This was a delicate compliment to Mr. Gratz, but Mr. Gratz was so used to receiving compliments when Mr. Smalley was talking to him that he did not blush with pleasure. He merely got red in the face. "Think of the advantage of saving one letter in every word that is written in every business office in America?" continued Mr. Smalley excitedly. "The ink saved by this company alone by dropping those letters will amount to

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a thousand dollars a year. And in the whole correspondence of the nation it will amount to millions! Millions of dollars, in ink alone, to say nothing of the time saved!" He got out of his chair and began to walk up and down the office, waving his arms. It helped him to get hot, and he liked to get hot when Mr. Gratz called. It was the only time he indulged himself. So he always got as hot as he could while he had the chance.

"Yes, sir!" he shouted, while Mr. Gratz sat shrunken down into his chair and watched him with a teasing smile. "And I will tell you something more. The policy of this company is to be economical. Yes, sir! And this company is going to adopt the simplified spelling! Going to adopt it right now! In spite of all the old-fogyism in the world! — Miss Merrill!"

The office-door opened, and a pompadour, followed by a demure young lady, entered the room. She slipped quietly into a chair

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beside the president's desk and laid her copy-book on the slide of the desk and waited while her employer arranged the words in his mind. Her pencil was delicately poised above the ruled page. While she waited she hit the front of her pompadour a few improving slaps with her unengaged hand and pulled out the slack of her waist front.

"Take this," said Mr. Smalley sharply. "General Order Number (you can supply the number, Miss Merrill). To all employees of the Interurban Express Company: On and after this date all employees of this company will use, in their correspondence and in all other official business, the following list of three hundred words. By order of the president. Read what you have there."

Miss Merrill ran one hand around her belt — she was the kind of girl that can make her toilet and do business at the same time — and read:

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"Her pencil was delicately poised above the ruled page"

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"'General Order Number Seven Hundred and Nineteen. To all employees of the Interurban Express Company: On and after this date all employees of this company will use, in their correspondence and in all other official business, the following list of three hundred words. By order of the president.'"

"Yes," said the president, tearing a strip from Mr. Gratz's newspaper that he held in his hand. "Here is the list of words. I want the whole thing mimeographed, and I want you to see that a copy gets into the hands of every man and woman in our employ: all the offices, here and on the road. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, and then she arose, fixed her neck scarf, and went out. Mr. Smalley took his seat at his desk and began arranging his papers, humming cheerfully.

Mr. Gratz arose and stalked silently out of the office. But when the door was closed

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behind him he smiled. One of the members of the "Simplified Spelling Board" was his personal friend. Mr. Gratz had prevailed upon Mr. Smalley to adopt the new spelling, and he had done so by using the only means he could use with hope of success.

The next day Mike Flannery, the Westcote agent of the express company, was sitting at his desk in the express office, carefully spelling out a letter to Mary O'Donnell, on whom his affections were firmly fixed, when he heard the train from Franklin whistle. He had time to read what he had written before he went to meet the train, and he glanced over the letter hastily.

"Dearst Mary Odonil," it said, "reply in to yourse i would say i ment no harm when i kised you last nite it did not mene you was no lady but my feelins got to mutch for me i love you so how was i to no you wood not like it when i had never tried it on befor if you dont like it i will let up on

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that after this but it was the best kiss i ever had ——" He stopped to scratch out the part about its being the best kiss he had ever had, for that seemed, on second thought, not the best thing to say, and then, as lovers so often do, he tore the whole letter to bits, and hurried to meet the train.

Flannery came back with a few packages and a couple of the long official envelopes. He dumped the packages on his counter and tore open the first of the envelopes. It was a mimeograph circular and had that benzine odor that Flannery had come to associate with trouble, for it meant a new rule that he must follow, or a change of rates that he must memorize, under penalty of dismissal. All orders were given under penalty of dismissal, and Flannery had so many rules and regulations under his red hair that each day he wondered whether he would still be the Westcote agent at the end of the next.

As he read his forehead wrinkled.

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" 'Gineral Order Number Sivin Hundred an' noineteen,' " he read slowly. "And is it possible 'tis only th' sivin hundred an' noineteenth of thim I have been gettin'? I w'u'd have said 't was th' forty-sivinth thousand gineral order I have had t' learn and memorize. Wheniver th' prisidint, or th' vice-prisidint, or th' manager, or th' janitor, or th' office-boy at th' head office has nawthin' else t' do they be thinkin' up a new gineral order t' sind t' Flannery. 'What 's th' news of th' day?' says th' prisidint. 'Nawthin' doin',' says th' janitor. 'Then wake up and sind Flannery a gineral order t' learn th' Declaration av Indepindince by hearrt,' says th' prisidint. 'Mebby he do be gittin' lazy!' 'And shall I add on th' Constitution av th' United States?' says th' janitor. 'Sure!' says th' prisidint, ''t will do Flannery no harm t' be busy.'"

He held the paper out at arm's length and shook his head at it, and then slapped it down on the counter and gave it his attention.

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"'To all imployees av th' Interurban Ixpriss Company,'" he read. "'On an' after this date all imployees av this company will use, in their correspondince, and in all other official business, the follyin' list av t'ree hunderd words. By order of th' prisidint.' Sure!" he said. "'Under penalty av dismissal from th' service av th' company,' as ye might be sayin'!"

He turned to the list of three hundred words and began to read it. As he passed down the list the frown on his brow deepened. At "anapest" it was a noticeable frown, at "apothem" it became very pronounced, and at "dieresis" his shaggy red brows nearly covered his eyes, he was frowning so hard.

"I wonder what th' Interurban Ixpriss Company w'u'd loike me t' be writin' thim on th' subject av 'ecumenical'?" he said. "Mebby there be some of these here 'edile' and 'egis' things comin' by ixpriss, and 't will be a foine thing t' know how t' spell

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thim whin th' con-*sign*-y puts in a claim fer damages, but if th' company is goin' t' carry many 'eponyms' and 'esophaguses' Mike Flannery will be lookin' for another job. — And w'u'd you look at this wan! 'Paleography!' Thim be nice words t' order th' agints av th' ixpriss company t' be usin'!"

He pulled at a lock of his hair thoughtfully.

"I wonder, now," he said, "do they want Mike Flannery t' learn all thim words by hearrt, and use thim all. Should I be usin' thim all in one letter, or distribute thim throughout th' correspondince, or what? 'T is a grand lot of worrds if I only knew what anny of thim meant, but 't will be hard t' find a subject t' write on t' run in this word of 'homonym.' There has not been one of thim about th' office since Mike Flannery has been here."

But his duty was plain, and he took his varnish pot and pasted the list on the wall beside his desk where he could refer to it

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instantly, and then he slid on to his high stool to write the acknowledgment of the receipt of the list.

"Interurban Express Co., Franklin. Gentelmen," he wrote, "I receved the genral order 719 and will oba it but I will have to practise v. and n. awhile first. some of the words dont come natural to me off hand like polyp and estivate. what is the rate on these if any comes exprest. whats a etiology. pleas advice me am I to use all these words or only sum. Mike Flannery."

He sealed this with the feeling that he had done well indeed for a first time. He had worked in "practise v. and n." and "exprest," and, if the head office should complain that he had not used enough of the words in the list, he could point to "polyp" and "estivate" and "etiology." It was slow work, for he had to look up each word he used before writing it, to see whether it was on the list or not, but generally it was not, and that gave him full liberty to spell it in

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any of the three or four simplified ways he was used to employing.

Then he turned to his letter to Mary O'Donnell. His buoyancy was somewhat lessened in this second attempt by the necessity of looking up each word as he used it, and he was working his way slowly, and had just told her he was sorry he had "kist" her ("kist" was in the three hundred), and that it had been because he had "fagot" himself ("fagot" was in the list also), when a man entered the office and laid a package on the counter.

Flannery slid from his stool and went to the counter. The man was Mr. Warold of the Westcote Tag Company, and the package was a bundle of tags that he wished to send by express. They were properly done up, for Mr. Warold sent many packages by express. It was addressed to the "Phoenix Sulphur Company, Armourville, Pa." It was marked "Collect" and "Keep Dry." It was a nice package, done up in a mas-

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terly manner, and the tags were to fill a rush order from the sulphur company.

Flannery pulled the package across the counter, and was about to drop it on the scales when the "Collect" caught his eye, and he held out his hand to Mr. Warold.

"Have ye brung th' receipt-book with ye?" he asked.

Mr. Warold felt in his coat-pocket. He had forgotten to bring the receipt book, and Flannery drew a pad of blank receipts toward himself, and dipped a pen into the ink. Then he looked at the address.

"'Pho-*e*-nix,'" he read slowly. "That do be a queer sort av a worrd, Mr. Warold. 'Pho-*e*-nix!' Is it a man's name, I dunno?"

"Feenix," pronounced Mr. Warold, grinning.

Flannery was writing carefully with his tongue clasped firmly between his teeth, but he stopped and looked up.

"'T is an odd way t' spell a worrd av that same pronownciation," he said, and

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then, suddenly, he laid down his pen and turned to the list of three hundred words that was pasted beside his desk.

"Oh, ho!" he exclaimed, when he had run his finger down the list, and then he ran it still farther and said it again, and more vigorously, and turned back to Mr. Warold. He shook his head and pushed the package across to Mr. Warold.

"Tek it back home, Mr. Warold," he said, "and change th' spellin' of th' worrds on th' address av it. 'T is agin th' rules av th' ixpriss company as it is. There be no 'o' in th' feenix av th' Interurban Ixpriss Company. P-h-e-n-i-x is th' improved and official spellin' av th' worrd, and th' rules av th' company is agin lettin' any feenixes with an 'o' in thim proceed into th' official business av th' company. And th' same of that 'Sulphur' worrd. It has been improved and fixed up accordin' to gineral order number sivin hunderd and noineteen, and th' way t' spell it is 'S-u-l-f-u-r,' and no other way

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goes across th' counter av th' ixpriss company whilst Mike Flannery runs it. And th' ixpriss company will have none of your 'Armourville,' Mr. Warold. There be no 'u' in th' worrd as 't is simplified by th' order av th' prisidint av th' Interurban."

Mr. Warold looked at the package and then at Flannery, and gasped. He was slow to anger, and slow in all ways, and it took him fully two minutes to let Flannery's meaning trickle into his brain. Then he pushed the package across to Flannery again and laughed.

"That is all right," he said. "I read all about the simplified spelling in the papers, and if your company wants to adopt it, it is none of my business, but this has nothing to do with that. This is the name of a company, and the name of a town, and companies and towns have a right to spell their names as they choose. That — why, everybody knows that!"

"Sure they have th' right," admitted

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Flannery pleasantly, but pushing the package slowly toward Mr. Warold; "sure they have! But not in th' ixpriss office av th' Interurban. 'T is agin th' rules t' spell any feenixes with an 'o' in th' ixpriss office, or any sulphurs with a 'ph,' or any armours with a 'u.' Thim spellin's and two hunderd an' ninety-sivin more are agin th' rules, and can't go. Packages that has thim on can't go. Nawthin' that has thim in thim or on thim or about thim can't go. Gineral order number sivin ——"

"Look here," said Mr. Warold slowly. "I tell you, Flannery, that those words are the names of a company ——"

"An' I tell ye," said Flannery, holding the package away from him with a firm hand, "that rules is rules, and gineral orders is worse than rules, an' thim spellin's can't go."

Mr. Warold flushed. He put his hand opposite to Flannery's hand on the package and pushed with an equal firmness.

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"I offer this package for shipment," he said with a trace of anger beginning to show in his voice. "I offer it to you just as it is; spelled as it is; and without change or anything else. This express company is a common carrier, under the Interstate Commerce Law, and it cannot refuse to take this package, spelling or no spelling. That is the law!"

"I have no quarrel with th' intercommerce state law, Mr. Warold, sir," said Flannery with dignity, "and 't is none of my business, sir. But th' spellin' of th' English language is, for 't is my duty by gineral order number sivin hunderd and noineteen t' spell three hundred worrds with th' proper simplification, and spell thim I will, and so will all that does business with Mike Flannery from sivin A.M. till nine P.M. Worrds that is not in th' three hunderd ye may spell as ye please, Mr. Warold, for there be no rule agin it, and in conversation or correspondince with Mike Flannery,

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before th' hour av sivin and after th' hour av nine, ye may spell as ye please, and I will do th' same, for thin I am off duty; but durin' th' office hours th' whole dang list from 'abridgment' t' 'wrapt' must be spelled accordin' t' orders. Yis, sir, 'polyp' and 'dactyl' and th' whole rist av thim. So tek th' package an' change th' address like a good man."

Mr. Warold glared at Flannery, and then turned to the door. He took one or two stiff strides, and then turned back. Anger was well enough as a luxury, but the Phoenix Sulphur Company had telegraphed for the tags, and business was a necessity. The tags must go out by the first train. He leaned over the counter and smiled at Flannery. Flannery glared back.

"See here, now, Flannery," he said gently, "you don't want to get into trouble with the United States Government, do you? And maybe get yourself and your president and every employee and officer of your

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company in jail for no one knows how long, do you? Well, then, just telegraph to your president and ask him whether he makes an exception in favour of the old spelling of names of companies, will you? That will do no harm. Tell him a package is offered, and tell him the address, and let him decide."

Flannery considered a moment and then took his telegraph pad.

"President Interurban, Franklin," he wrote, "Shall i take pakag for Phoenix Sulphur Company, Armourdale. Anser quick. Westcote."

He ran across the street with it and came back. The head office had a direct wire, and the answer came a minute after Flannery reached the waiting Mr. Warold.

"Westcote. Give fuller particulars. Name consignor. Contents. Objection to receiving. (Signed) Franklin."

Flannery showed the message to Mr. Warold, and then took up his pen again.

"President Interurban, Franklin," he wrote,

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"Consinor Westcote tag company. tags in it. o is in phenix and ph in sulfur and u in armordale. Westcote."

The president sitting in his private office, received the message and wrinkled his brow as he read it. Telegraphing does not always improve the legibility of a message. As the message reached the president it read:

"Consinor westcote tag company tag sis in it oisin phenix phin sulfur uin armordale."

The president reached for his pile of various code-books and looked up the strange words. He found "phoenix" in one code-book with its meaning given as "extremely ill, death imminent." "Oisin" was not given, but the word "oisanite" was, and the meaning of that the code stated to be "five hundred head prime steers." It was enough. The Interurban did not wish to accept the transportation of five hundred extremely ill steers, whose death was imminent.

"Westcote, refuse consignment absolutely. Write particulars," he wired.

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Flannery showed the telegram to Mr. Warold, who would have sworn, if swearing had been his custom, but it was not. He took the package of tags and went back to his office and did the tags up in smaller bundles and sent them by mail with a special delivery stamp on each lot, and charged the cost to the Interurban. Then he wrote a long and fervid letter to the president of the Interurban, in which he gave his opinion of the simplified spelling, and particularly of a man who would interpolate it into business by the power of his personal fiat.

And Flannery wrote too.

President Interurban, Franklin," he wrote. "i sent warold away with his tags pakag as you say to. he is mad I gess he will try to make trubbel. i tole him we coud not acsept pakags addrest to Phoenix Sulphur Company Armourdale and it made him mad. no falt of mine. i ast him to leve out o out of phoenix and to yous f insted of ph in

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sulphur and too take that u out of armourdale agreeble to generl order numbr 719 and he wont do it. no falt of mine. i got to spell rite when the rules sa so. no falt of mine. i aint makin rules i sais to him. pres of inter-urban is responssibel how we spel. i onnly spel as he sais too. Flannery."

The president received the two letters in the same mail. He read that of Mr. Warold first, and when he came to a threat to sue the company, he frowned. This was all new to him. There was nothing in the letter about five hundred indisposed cattle of any kind. He looked up Flannery's telegrams, but they cast no light on it. Then he opened Flannery's letter and read it. He got up and began walking up and down his office, stopping now and then to shake the fist in which he had crumpled Flannery's letter. Then he called for Miss Merrill.

She came, carrying her notebook in one hand and fixing a comb in the back of her hair with the other.

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"Take this!" said the president angrily. "Flannery, Westcote ——" He tramped back and forth, trying to condense all the bitterness that boiled in him into telling words.

"You are a fool!" he said at length, meaning Flannery and not Miss Merrill.

Then he thought a while. Having said that, there was not much stronger that he could say. He had reached his climax too soon.

"Scratch that out," he said, and began walking again. He looked at Flannery's letter and scowled.

Miss Merrill waited patiently. It gave her an opportunity to primp.

"Never mind, Miss Merrill," said the president finally. "I will call you later." He was wondering whether he should discharge Flannery, or issue Webster's Unabridged as General Order Number 720, or what he should do.

And Flannery went on with his letter to

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Mary O'Donnell, for it was a work of several days with him. A love-letter was alone enough to worry him, but, when he had to think of things to say and still keep one eye on the list of three hundred words, his thoughts got away from him before he could find whether they had to be put in simplified words or in the good old go-as-you-please English that he usually wrote.

He was sitting at the desk when a messenger from the head office came in. The messenger had been sent down to Westcote by the president, and had just been across to the tag company to fix things up with Mr. Warold. He had fixed them, and the lever he had used was a paper he held in his hand. It had mollified Mr. Warold.

As the messenger entered, Flannery looked up from his letter, and he smiled with pleasure. He was glad to see some one from the head office. He wanted information about some of the words he was ordered to use. He was puzzled about "stript." Did it mean

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"striped" or "stripped"? And was "tost the kind of toast you eat or the kind you drink? And how about that funny-looking combination of letters "thru," and a dozen others?

"I 'm glad t' see th' sight av ye," he said, holding out his hand, "for I do be wantin' some help on these three hunderd worrds th' prisidint has been simplifyin' down. 'T is a turrible job they be, thim three hunderd! Some av thim I never will be after learnin'. Look at this, now," he said, putting his finger on "orthopedic." "And this wan," he said, touching "esophagus." "Thim be tough wans! But it 's thankful I am there be but three hunderd av thim. There w'u'd be no ind t' th' day's worrk sh'u'd th' prisidint take a notion t' reforrm th' whole dic-shunnery. If he was t' shorten all th' worrds in th' English language, I w'u'd have a long job av it, niver knowin' whin th' worrds was spelled right or wrong. They be a powerful increase of worrk, thim three hunderd worrds. Take this wan, now —

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'thoroly' — 't is a bird, that wan is! But Flannery will stick t' th' list!"

The messenger laid the paper he had been holding upon Flannery's desk.

"I will be needin' an assistant sh'u'd th' prisidint promulgate any more worrds like thim," said Flannery; "and I w'u'd recommind he be Corbett or Sullivan or wan of th' other sluggers, for th' patrons av th' company be not all easy-goin' like Mr. Warold. But progress is th' worrd of th' day, and I stand for shorter worrds, no matter how much extry worrk they mek. Th' prisidint has a great head on him."

He opened the paper on his desk and read it.

"General Order Number Seven Hundred and Twenty:

"To all employees of the Interurban Express Company: Cancel General Order Number Seven Hundred and Nineteen. By order of the president."

"As I was sayin'," said Flannery, "th' prisidint has a great head on him."

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FLEAS WILL BE FLEAS

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III

FLEAS WILL BE FLEAS

Mike Flannery was the star boarder at Mrs. Muldoon's, and he deserved to be so considered, for he had boarded with Mrs. Muldoon for years, and was the agent of the Interurban Express Company at Westcote, while Mrs. Muldoon's other boarders were largely transient.

"Mike," said Mrs. Muldoon, one noon, when Mike came for his lunch, "I know th' opinion ye have of Dagos, and niver a-one have I took into me house, and I think the same of thim meself — dirthy things, an' takin' the bread away from th' honest Amercan laborin' man — and I would not be thinkin' of takin' one t' board at this day, but would ye tell me this: — is a Frinchmin a Dago?"

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Flannery raised his knife and laid down the law with it.

"Mrs. Muldoon, mam," he said, "there be two kinds of Frinchmin. There be the respictible Frinchmin, and there be th' unrespictible Frinchmin. They both be furriners, but they be classed different. Th' respictible Frinchmin is no worse than th' Dutch, and is classed as Dutch, but th' other kind is Dagos. There is no harm in th' Dutch Frinchmin, for thim is such as Napoleon Bonnypart and the like of him, but ye want t' have nawthin' t' do with th' Dago Frinch. They be a bad lot."

"There was a Frinchmin askin' would I give him a room and board, this mornin'," said Mrs. Muldoon.

Flannery nodded knowingly.

"I knowed it!" he cried. "'T was apparent t' me th' minute ye spoke, mam. And agin th' Dutch Frinch I have nawthin' t' say. If he be a Dutch Frinchmin let him come. Was he that?"

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"Sure, I don't know," said Mrs. Muldoon, perplexed. "He was a pleasant-spoken man, enough. 'T is a professor he is."

"There be many kinds of professors," said Mike.

"Sure!" agreed Mrs. Muldoon. "This wan is a professor of fleas."

Mike Flannery grinned silently at his plate.

"I have heard of thim, too!" he said. "But 't is of insects they be professors, and not of one kind of insects alone, Mrs. Muldoon, mam. Ye have mistook th' understandin' of what he was sayin'."

"I beg pardon to ye, Mr. Flannery," said Mrs. Muldoon, with some spirit, "but 't is not mistook I am. Fleas th' professor said, and no mistake at all."

"Yis?" inquired Flannery. "Well, mebby 't is so. He would be what ye call one of thim specialists. They do be doin' that now, I hear, and 't is probable th' Frinchmin has fleas for his specialty. 'T is like this, mam: — all professors is professors; then a

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bunch of professors separate off from the rest and be professors of insects; and then the professors of insects separate up, and one is professor of flies, and another one is professor of pinch-bugs, and another is professor of toads, and another is professor of lobsters, and so on until all the kinds of insects has each a professor to itself. And them they call specialists, and each one knows more about his own kind of insect than any other man in th' world knows. So mebby the Frinchmin is professor of fleas, as ye say."

"I should think a grown man would want to be professor of something bigger than that," said Mrs. Muldoon, "but there 's no accountin' for tastes."

"If ye understood, mam," said Mike Flannery, "ye would not say that same, for to the flea professor th' flea is as big as a house. He studies him throo a telescope, Mrs. Muldoon, that magnifies th' flea a million times. Th' flea professor will take

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a dog with a flea on him, mam, and look at th' same with his telescope, and th' flea will be ten times th' size of th' dog."

"'T is wonderful!" exclaimed Mrs. Muldoon.

"It is so!" agreed Mike Flannery. "But 't is by magnifyin' th' flea that th' professor is able t' study so small an insect for years and years, discoverin' new beauties every day. One day he will be studyin' th' small toe of th' flea's left hind foot, and th' next day he will be makin' a map of it, and th' next he will be takin' a statute of it in plaster, an th' next he will be photygraftin it, and th' next he will be writin' out all he has learned of it, and then he will be weeks and months correspondin' with other flea professors in all parts of th' worrld, seein' how what he has learned about th' little toe of th' flea's left hind foot agrees with what they have learned about it, and if they don't all agree, he goes at it agin, and does it all over agin, and mebby he dies when he is ninety years old and has

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only got one leg of th' flea studied out. And then some other professor goes on where he left off, and takes up the next leg."

"And do they get paid for it?" asked Mrs. Muldoon, with surprise.

"Sure, they do!" said Flannery. "Good money, too. A good specialist professor gits more than an ixpriss agent. And 't is right they sh'u'd," he added generously, "for 't is by studyin' th' feet of fleas, and such, they learn about germs, and how t' take out your appendix, and 'Is marriage a failure?' and all that."

"Ye dumbfounder me, Mike Flannery," said Mrs. Muldoon. "Ye should have been one of them professors yourself, what with all the knowledge ye have. And ye think 't would be a good thing t' let th' little Frinchmin come and take a room?"

"'T would be an honour to shake him by th' hand," said Mike Flannery, and so the professor was admitted to the board and lodging of Mrs. Muldoon.

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The name of the professor who, after a short and unfruitful season at Coney Island, took lodging with Mrs. Muldoon, was Jocolino. He had shown his educated fleas in all the provinces of France, and in Paris itself, but he made a mistake when he brought them to America.

The professor was a small man, and not talkative. He was, if anything, inclined to be silently moody, for luck was against him. He put his baggage in the small bedroom that Mrs. Muldoon allotted to him, and much of the time he spent in New York. He had fellow countrymen there, and he was trying to raise a loan, with which to buy a canvas booth in which to show his educated insects. He received the friendly advances of Flannery and the other boarders rather coldly. He refused to discuss his specialty, or show Mike the toe of the left hind foot of a flea through a telescope. When he remained at home after dinner he did not sit with the other boarders on the porch,

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but walked up and down the walk, smoking innumerable cigarettes, and thinking, and waving his hands in mute conversations with himself.

"I dunno what ails th' professor," said Mrs. Muldoon, one evening when she and Flannery sat at the table after the rest had left it.

Flannery hesitated.

"I would not like to say for sure, mam," he said, slowly, "but I 'm thinkin' 't is a loss he has had, maybe, that 's preyin' on his mind. Ever since ye told me, Missus Muldoon, that he was a professor of th' educated fleas, I have had doubts of th' state of th' mind of th' professor. Th' sense of studyin' th' flea, mam, I can understand, that bein' th' way all professors does these days, but 't is not human t' spend time givin' a flea a college education. Th' man that descinds t' be tutor t' a flea, and t' teach it all th' accomplishments, from readin' and writin' t' arithmetic and foot-

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ball, mebby, is peculiar. I will say he is dang peculiar, Missus Muldoon, beggin' your pardon. Is there any coffee left in the pot, mam?"

"A bit, Mr. Flannery, an' you 're welcome t' it."

"I understand th' feelin' that makes a man educate a horse, like that Dutchman I was readin' about in th' Sunday paper th' other day," said Mike, "and teachin' it t' read an' figger, an' all that. An' I can see th' sinse of educatin' a pig, as has been done, as you well know, mam, for there be no doubt a man can love a horse or a pig as well as he can love his own wife ——"

"An' why not a flea?" asked Mrs. Muldoon. "'T is natural for an Irishman t' love a pig, if 't is a pig worth lovin', and 't is natural, I make no doubt, for a Dutchman t' love a horse th' same way, and each t' his own, as th' sayin' is. Mebby th' Frinch can learn t' love th' flea in th' same way, Mr. Flannery."

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"I say th' same, Missus Muldoon," said Flannery, "an' I say th' professor has done that same, too. I say he has educated th' flea, an' mebby raised it from a baby, and brung it from his native land, mam, an' taught it, an' learned t' love it. Yes, Missus Muldoon! But if th' educated horse or th' educated pig got loose would they be easy t' find agin, or would they not, mam? And if th' professor come t' have a grrand love for th' flea he has raised by hand, an' taught like his own son, an' th' flea run off from him, would th' educated flea be easy t' find? Th' horse an' th' pig is animals that is not easy t' conceal themselves, Missus Muldoon, but th' flea is harrd t' find, an' when ye have found him he is harrd t' put your thumb on. I 'm thinkin' th' reason th' professor is so down is that he has lost th' flea of his hearrt."

"Poor man!" said Mrs. Muldoon.

"An' th' reason I 'm thinkin' so," said Flannery slowly, and leaning toward Mrs. Muldoon

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across the table, "is that, if I be not mistaken, Missus Muldoon, th' professor's educated flea spent last night with Mike Flannery!"

Mrs. Muldoon raised her hands with a gesture of wonderment.

"And listen to that, now!" she cried, in astonishment. "Mike Flannery, do you be thinkin' th' professor has *two* of them? Sure, and he must have two of them, for was it not mesilf was thinkin' all last night I had th' same educated flea for a bed-felly? I would have caught him," she added, sadly, "but he was too brisk for me."

"There was forty-sivin times I thought I had mine," admitted Flannery, "but every time whin I took up me thumb he had gone some other place. But I will have him to-night!"

"But mebby he has gone by now," said Mrs. Muldoon.

"Never fear, mam," said Flannery. "He 's not gone, mam, for he has been close to me every minute of th' day. I could put

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me thumb on him this minute, if he would but wait 'till I did it."

"Well, as for that, Mike Flannery," said Mrs. Muldoon, mischievously, as she arose from the table, "go on along with ye, and don't be bringin' th' blush t' me face, but whin I want t' find th' one I was speakin' of, I won't have t' walk away from meself t' find him this minute!"

The trained flea is one of nature's marvels. Everyone says so. A Bobby Burns might well write a poem on this "wee, timorous, cowerin' beastie," except that the flea is not, strictly speaking, timorous or cowering. A flea, when it is in good health and spirits, will not cower worth a cent. It has ten times the bravery of a lion — in fact, one single little flea, alone and unaided, will step right up and attack the noisiest lion, and never brag about it. A lion is a rank coward in comparison with a flea, for a lion will not attack anything that it has not a good chance of killing, while the

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humble but daring flea will boldly attack animals it cannot kill, and that it knows it cannot kill. David had at least a chance to kill Goliath, but what chance has a flea to kill a camel? None at all unless the camel commits suicide. And dogs! A flea will attack the most ferocious dog and think nothing of it at all. I have seen it myself. That is true bravery. And not only that — not only will one flea attack a dog — but hundreds of fleas will attack the same dog at the same time. I have seen that myself, too. And that multiplies the bravery of the flea just that much. One flea attacking a dog is brave; one hundred fleas attacking the same dog are therefore one hundred times as brave. We really had to give the dog away, he was carrying so much bravery around with him all the time.

Think of educating an animal with a brain about the size of the point of a fine needle! And that was what Professor Jocolino had done. The flea is really one

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of nature's wonders, like Niagara Falls, and Jojo the dog-faced man, and the Cañon of the Colorado. Pull? For its size the educated flea can pull ten times as much as the strongest horse. Jump? For its size the flea can jump forty times as far as the most agile jack-rabbit. Its hide is tougher than the hide of a rhinoceros, too. Imagine a rhinoceros standing in Madison Square, in the City of New York, and suppose you have crept up to it, and are going to pat it, and your hand is within one foot of the rhinoceros. And before you can bring your hand to touch the beast suppose it makes a leap, and goes darting through the air so rapidly that you can't see it go, and that before your hand has fallen to where the rhinoceros was, the rhinoceros has alighted gently on top of the City Hall at Philadelphia. That will give you some idea of the magnificent qualities of the flea. If we only knew more of these ordinary facts about things we would love things more.

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At the breakfast table the next morning Professor Jocolino sat silent and moody in his place, his head bent over his breakfast, but the nine other men at the table eyed him suspiciously. So did Mrs. Muldoon. There was no question now that Professor Jocolino had lost his educated flea. There was, in fact, ground for the belief that the professor had had more than one educated flea, and that he had lost all of them. There was also a belief that, however well trained the lost might be in some ways, their manners had not been carefully attended to, and that they had not been trained to be well behaved when making visits to utter strangers. A beast or bird that will force itself upon the hospitality of an utter stranger unasked, and then bite its host, may be well educated, but it is not polite. The boarders looked at Professor Jocolino and frowned. The professor looked stolidly at his plate, and ate hurriedly, and left the table before the others had finished.

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"'T is in me mind," said Flannery, when the professor had left, "that th' professor has a whole college of thim educated insects, an' that he do be lettin' thim have a vacation. Or mebby th' class of 1907 is graduated an' turned loose from th' university. I had th' base-ball team an' th' football gang spendin' th' night with me."

"Ho!" said Hogan, gruffly, "'t was th' fellys that does th' high jump an' th' long jump an' th' wide jump was havin' a meet on Hogan. An' I will be one of anny ten of us t' tell th' professor t' call th' scholards back t' school agin. I be but a plain uneducated man, Missus Muldoon, an' I have no wish t' speak disrespect of thim as is educated, but th' conversation of a gang of Frinch educated fleas is annoyin' t' a man that wants t' sleep."

"I will speak t' th' professor, gintlemin," said Mrs. Muldoon, "an' remonstrate with him. Mary, me girrl," she added, to the maid, who was passing her chair, "would

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ye mind givin' me th' least bit of a rub between me shoulders like? I will speak t' th' professor, for I have no doubt he has but t' say th' worrd t' his scholards, an' they will all run back where they belong."

But the professor did not come back that day. He must have had urgent business in New York, for he remained there all night, and all the next day, too, and if he had not paid his bill in advance, Mrs. Muldoon would have suspected that he had run away. But his bill was paid, and his luggage was still in the room, and the educated fleas, or their numerous offspring, explored the boarding-house at will, and romped through all the rooms as if they owned them. If Professor Jocolino had been there he would have had to listen to some forcible remonstrances. It was Flannery who at length took the law into his own hands.

It was late Sunday evening. The upper hall was dark, and Flannery stole softly

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down the hall in his socks and pushed open the professor's door. The room was quite dark, and Flannery stole into it and closed the door behind himself. He drew from his pocket an insect-powder gun, and fired it. It was an instrument something like a bellows, and it fired by a simple squeeze, sending a shower of powder that fell in all directions. It was a light, yellow powder, and Flannery deluged the room with it. He stole stealthily about, shooting the curtains, shooting the bed, shooting the picture of the late Mr. Timothy Muldoon, shooting the floor. He bent down and shot under the bed, and under the washstand, until a film of yellow dust lay over the whole room, and then he turned to the closet and opened that. There hung Professor Jocolino's other clothes, and Flannery jerked them from the hooks and carried them at arm's length to the bed, and shot them.

As he was shooting into the pocket of a pair of striped trousers the door opened and

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Professor Jocolino stood on the threshold. There was no doubt in the professor's mind. He was being robbed! He drew a pistol from his pocket and fired. The bullet whizzed over the bending Flannery's head, and before the professor could fire a second time Flannery rose and turned and, with a true aim, shot the professor!

Shot him full in the face with the insect powder, and before the blinded man could recover his breath or spit out the bitter dose, or wipe his eyes, Flannery had him by the collar and had jerked him to the head of the stairs. It is true; he kicked him downstairs. Not insultingly, or with bad feeling, but in a moment of emotional insanity, as the defense would say. This was an extenuating circumstance, and excuses Flannery, but the professor, being a foreigner, could not see the fine point of the distinction, and was angry.

That night the professor did not sleep in Westcote, but the next afternoon he appeared

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at Mrs. Muldoon's, supported by Monsieur Jules, the well-known Seventh Avenue *restaurateur*, and Monsieur Renaud, who occupies an important post as *garcon* in Monsieur Jules' establishment.

"For the keek," said the professor, "I care not. I have been keek before. The keek by one gentleman, him I resent, him I revenge; the keek by the base, him I scorn! I let the keek go, Madame Muldoon. Of the keek I say not at all, but the flea! Ah, the poor flea! Excuse the weep, Madame Muldoon!"

The professor wept into his handkerchief, and the two men looked seriously solemn, and patted the professor on the back.

"Ah, my Alphonse, the flea! The poor leetle flea!" they cried.

"For the flea I have the revenge!" cried the professor, fiercely. "How you say it? I will be to have the revenge. I would to be the revenge having. The revenge to having will I be. Him will I have, that

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revenge business! For why I bring the educate flea to those States United? Is it that they should be deathed? Is it that a Flannery should make them dead with a — with such a thing like a pop-gun? Is it for these things I educate, I teach, I culture, I love, I cherish those flea? Is it for these things I give up wife, and patrie, and immigrate myself out of dear France? No, my Jules! No, my Jacques! No, my madame! Ah, I am one heart-busted!"

"Ah, now, professor," said Mrs. Muldoon, soothingly, "don't bawl annymore. There is sure no use bawlin' over spilt milk. If they be dead, they be dead. I would n't cry over a million dead fleas."

"The American flea — no!" said the professor, haughtily. "The Irish flea — no! The flea *au naturel* — no! But the educate flea of *la belle France?* The flea I have love, and teach, and make like a sister, a sweetheart to me? The flea that have act up in front of the crowned heads of Spain; that

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have travel on the ocean; that travel on the land? Ah, Madame Muldoon, it is no common bunch of flea! Of my busted feelings what will I say? Nothings! Of my banged-up heart, what will I say? Nothings! But for those dead flea, those poor dead flea, so innocents, so harmless, so much money worth — for those must Monsieur Flannery compensate."

As the professor's meaning dawned on Mrs. Muldoon a look of amazement spread over her face.

"And would be ye makin' poor Mike Flannery pay good money for thim rascal fleas he kilt, and him with his ankles so bit up they look like the small-pox, to say nothin' of other folks which is th' same?" she cried. "'T is ashamed ye should be, Mister Professor, bringin' fleas into America and lettin' them run loose! Ye should muzzle thim, Mister Professor, if ye would turn thim out to pasture in the boardin'-house of a poor widdy woman, and no end of trouble, and worry,

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and every one sayin', 'Why did ye let th' Dago come for, annyhow?'"

The professor and his friends sat silent under this attack, and when it was finished they arose.

"Be so kind," said the professor, politely, "to tell the Flannery the ultimatum of Monsieur the Professor Jocolino. One hundred educate French flea have I bring to the States United. Of the progeny I do not say. One milliard, two milliard, how many is those progeny I do not know, but of him I speak not. Let him go. I make the Flannery a present of those progeny. But for those one hundred fine educate French flea must he pay. One dollar per each educate flea must he pay, that Flannery! It is the ultimatum! I come Sunday at past-half one on the clock. That Flannery will the money ready have, or the law will be on him. It is sufficient!"

The three compatriots bowed low, and went away. For fully five minutes Mrs.

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Muldoon sat in a sort of stupor, and then she arose and went about her work. After all it was Flannery's business, and none of hers, but she wished the men had gone to Flannery, instead of delegating her to tell him.

"Thief of th' worrld!" exclaimed Flannery, when she told him the demand the professor had made. "Sure, I have put me foot in it this time, Missus Muldoon, for kill thim I did, and pay for thim I must, I dare say, but 't will be no fun t' do it! One hunderd dollars for fleas, mam! Did ever an Irishman pay the like before? One week ago Mike Flannery would not have give one dollar for all the fleas in th' worrld. But 'Have to' is a horse a man must ride, whether he wants to or no."

But the more Flannery thought about having to pay out one hundred dollars for one hundred dead insects the less he liked it and the more angry be became. It could not be denied that one dollar was a reasonable

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price for a flea that had had a good education. A man could hardly be expected to take a raw country flea, as you might say, and educate it, and give it graces and teach it dancing and all the accomplishments for less than a dollar. But one hundred dollars was a lot of money, too. If it had been a matter of one flea Flannery would not have worried, but to pay out one hundred dollars in a lump for flea-slaughter, hurt his feelings. He did not believe the fleas were worth the price, and he inquired diligently, seeking to learn the market value of educated fleas. There did not seem to be any market value. One thing only he learned, and that was that the government of the United States, in Congress assembled, had recognized that insects have a value, for he found in the list of customs duties this: — "Insects, not crude, ¼ cent per pound and 10 per cent. ad valorem."

As Flannery leaned over his counter at the office of the Interurban Express Com-

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pany and spelled this out in the book of customs duties he frowned, but as he looked at it his frown changed to a smile, and from a smile to a grin, and he shut the book, and put it in his pocket. He was ready to meet the professor.

"Good day to yez," he said, cheerfully, when he went into the little parlor on Sunday afternoon, and found the professor sitting there, flanked by his two fellow countrymen. "I have come t' pay ye th' hunderd dollars Missus Muldoon was tellin' me about."

The professor bowed and said nothing. The two gentlemen from Seventh Avenue also bowed, and they, too, said nothing.

"I 'm glad ye spoke about it," said Flannery, good-naturedly, "for 't is always a pleasure to Mike Flannery to pay his honest debts, and I might not have thought of it if ye had not mentioned it. I was thinkin' them was nawthin' but common, ignorant fleas, professor."

"Ah, no!" cried the professor. "The

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very educate flea! The flea of wisdom! The very teached flea!"

"Hear that, now!" said Flannery, "and did they really come all th' way from France, professor? Or is this a joke ye are playin' on me?"

"The truly French flea!" explained the professor. "From Paris herselfs. The genuine. The import flea."

"And to think ye brought thim all th' way yerself, professor! For ye did, I believe?"

"Certain!" cried all three.

"An' t' think of a flea bein' worth a dollar! said Flannery. "Thim can't be crude fleas at sich a price, professor."

"No! Certain, no!" cried the three men again.

"Not crude," said Flannery, "and imported by th' professor! 'T is odd I should have seen a refirince t' them very things this very day, professor. 'T is in this book here." He took the list of customs duties from his pocket and leaned his elbows on his knees, and ran his hand down the pages.

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"'Cattle, if less than one year old, per head, two dollars. All other, if valued less than $14 per head, $3.75; if valued more than $14 per head, twinty-sivin and one half per cent.,'" read Flannery. "Sure, fleas does not count as cattle, professor. Nor does they come in as swine, th' duty on which is one dollar an' fifty cints per head. I know th' pig, an' I am acquainted with th' flea, an' there is a difference between thim that annyone would recognize. Nor do they be 'Horses an' Mules' nor yet 'Sheep,' Some might count them in as 'All other live animals not otherwise specified, twinty per cent.,' but 't was not there I saw refirince t' thim. 'Fish,'" he read, "th' flea is no more fish than I am ——" He turned the pages, and continued down through that wonderful list that embraces everything known to man. The three Frenchmen sat on the edges of their chairs, watching him eagerly.

"Ho, ho!" Flannery sang out at length.

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"Here it is! 'Insects, not crude, one quarter cent per pound and tin per cint. ad valorum.' What is ad valorum, I dunno, but 't is a wonderful thing th' tariff is. Who would be thinkin' tin years ago that Professor Jocolino would be comin' t' Ameriky with one hundred fleas, not crude, in his dress-suit portmanteau? But th' Congress was th' boy t' think of everything. 'No free fleas!' says they. 'Look at th' poor American flea, crude an' uneducated, an' see th' struggle it has, competin' with th' flea of Europe, Asia, an' Africa. Down with th' furrin flea,' says Congress, 'protect th' poor American insect. One quarter cent per pound an' tin per cint. ad valorum for th' flea of Europe!"

Mike Flannery brought his hand down on the book he held, and the three men, who had been watching him with a fascinated stare, jumped nervously.

"That 's what Congress says," said Flannery, glaring at the professor, "but up

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jumps th' Sinator from Californy. 'Stop!' he says, 'wait! 'T is all right enough for th' East t' rule out th' flea, but th' Californian loves th' flea like a brother. We want free fleas.' Then up jumps th' Sinator from New York. 'I don't object t' th' plain or crude flea comin' in free,' says he, 'for there be need of thim, as me frind from th' West says. What amusement would th' dogs of th' nation have but for th' flea?' says he. 'But I am thinkin' of th' sivinty-three theayters on an' off Broadway,' says he. 'Shall th' amusemint industry of th' metropolis suffer from th' incoming of th' millions of educated an' trained fleas of Europe? Shall Shakespere an' Belasco an' Shaw be put out of business by th' pauper flea theayters of Europe? No!' says he. 'I move t' amend th' tariff of th' United States t' read that th' duty on insects, not crude, be one fourth of a cent per pound an' tin per cint. ad valorum,' he says, 'which will give th' dog all th' crude fleas he wants, an' yit shut

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out th' educated flea from compytition with grand opera an' Barnum's circus.' An' so 'twas voted," concluded Mike Flannery.

Monsieur Jules fidgeted and looked at his watch.

"Be easy," said Flannery. "There 's no hurry. I 'm waitin' for a frind of mine, an' 't is fine t' talk over th' tariff with educated min once in a while. Th' frind I 'm lookin' for anny minute now is a fine expert on th' subject of th' tariff himself. O'Halloran is th' name of him. Him as is th' second deputy assistant collector of evidence of fraud an' smugglin' in th' revenue service of th' United States. 'T was a mere matter of doubt in me mind," said Flannery, easily, "regardin' th' proper valuation of th' professor's fleas. I was thinkin' mebby one dollar was not enough t' pay for a flea, not crude, so I asks O'Halloran. ''T will be easy t' settle that,' says O'Halloran, 'for th' value of thim will be set down in th' books of th' United States, at th' time whin

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th' professor paid th' duty on thim. I 'll just look an' see how much th' duty was paid on,' says he. 'But mebby th' professor paid no duty on thim,' I says. 'Make no doubt of that,' says O'Halloran, 'for unless th' professor was a fool he would pay th' duty like a man, for th' penalty is fine an' imprisonmint,' says O'Halloran, 'an' I make no doubt he paid it. I will be out Sunday at four,' says O'Halloran, 'an' give ye th' facts, an' I hope th' duty is paid as it should be, for if 't is not paid 't will be me duty t' arrest th' professor an' ——'"

Flannery stopped and listened.

"Is that th' train from th' city I hear?" he said. "O'Halloran will sure be on it."

The professor arose, and so did the two friends who had come with him to help him carry home the one hundred dollars. The professor slapped himself on the pockets, looked in his hat, and slapped himself on the pockets again.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed, and in an

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instant he and his friends were in an excited conversation that went at the rate of three hundred words a minute. Then the professor turned to Flannery.

"I return," he said. "I have lost the most valued thing, the picture of the dear mamma. It is lost! It is picked of the pocket! Villains! I go to the police. I return."

He did not wait for permission, but went, and that was the last Mike Flannery or Mrs. Muldoon ever saw of him.

"An' t' think of me a free trader every day of me born life," said Mike Flannery that evening to Mrs. Muldoon, "but I be so no more. I see th' protection there is in th' protective tariff, Missus Muldoon, mam."

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